

occurs, as in *Christ and the adulteress* (c.1512/15; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), where the power of Christ's persuasion is emphasised by depicting different levels of conversion, from the piety of the woman to the varied reactions of the Pharisees, some of whom are preparing to leave while others are clearly deeply affected by Christ's speech. The author convincingly argues that in this and other paintings, such as the *Temptation of Christ* (c.1516–25; Minneapolis Institute of Art), viewers are compelled to contemplate how they ought to respond to Christ's words as reported in the Bible. Thus, the images themselves transmit the salvific power of Christ's words. A key part of this argument is the parallel the author draws between Titian's strategy and Erasmus's use of adages to put 'abstract philosophical concepts into everyday action' (p.82). Like Erasmus in his words, Titian in his images offered an interpretation of the scriptures for the viewers' moral guidance, inviting them to contemplate how to apply and imitate Christ's teachings.

From the mid-1540s onwards, when the Catholic reformist movement lost momentum and gave way to the era of confessionalism, Titian replaced exegesis with an emphasis on compassion and shifted focus onto Christ's suffering, in line with the Tridentine spirit. His multiple versions of *Ecce homo* were intended to encourage the formation of a spiritual community of beholders, which included Pope Paul III, Emperor Charles V, Charles's secretary of state Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle and the polymath Pietro Aretino, all of whom received an image of Christ as a gift from Titian. Nygren echoes Alexander Nagel's reading of the drawings of the *pietà* that Michelangelo donated to Vittoria Colonna, with the key difference that Titian sought to reach a larger circle of people than the restricted group of Catholic reformers of Colonna's milieu.³ In *Ecce homo*, painted on slate for Charles V, and its pendant, *Mater dolorosa* (with her hands apart) painted on marble (1547 and 1555; Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid), the unusual medium of stone is intended to remind the viewer that Christ is described in the Bible as the cornerstone, and to present him as the touchstone of faith for the beholder.

The book ends with a sophisticated analysis of the *Pietà* (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice) that Titian painted in the final two years of his life for his tomb in the church of the Frari, Venice. In contrast to the conventional understanding of the painting

as focused on the artist's own death and redemption, Nygren offers an intriguing new interpretation: although not an icon as such, this huge altarpiece is Titian's ultimate reflection on icon making. Emphasising the fictive votive tablet and wax offering depicted on the lower right, Nygren reads it as a comment on the mechanisms of miraculous agency and the efficacy of images in the economy of grace.

It is true that most art historians would question the degree of intellectual control over the creative process that Nygren attributes to Titian. His assertion that theological arguments can be expressed visually before being articulated verbally is also unlikely to be unanimously accepted. Any assessment of how works of art were interpreted in their own time, especially in relation to religious themes, must remain speculative to some extent. However, Nygren's analysis is always supported by solid epistemological models and interpretative tools. Key terms such as charisma, identity and tradition are weighed against a vast literature that cuts across disciplines, from political sciences to literary theory, and from moral philosophy to linguistics. With its penetrating visual analysis and carefully conceived theoretical structure, this book makes a significant and innovative contribution not only to the field of Titian studies, but more broadly to the study of pre-modern visual culture.

1 See E. Panofsky: 'Imago Pietatis: ein Beitrag zur Typengeschichte des "Schmerzensmanns" und der "Maria Mediatrix"', in *Festschrift für Max J. Friedländer zum 60. Geburtstag*, Leipzig 1927, pp.261–308; and S. Ringbom: *Icon to Narrative: The Rise of the Dramatic Close-Up in Fifteenth-Century Devotional Painting*, Åbo 1965.

2 See H. Belting: *Bild und Kult: eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst*, Munich 1990.

3 See A. Nagel: *Michelangelo and the Reform of Art*, Cambridge and New York 2000.

Las mujeres y las artes: Mecenas, artistas, emprendedoras y coleccionistas

Edited by Beatriz Blasco Esquivias, Jonatan Jair López Muñoz and Sergio Ramiro Ramírez. 848 pp. incl. 138 b. & w. ills. (Abada Editores, Madrid, 2021), €33. ISBN 978-84-17301-64-4.

by MARÍA CRUZ DE CARLOS VARONA

Between 2015 and 2019 Beatriz Blasco Esquivias led a research project at the Universidad Complutense, Madrid, which investigated the involvement of women in the arts in the Hispanic world from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. This

collection of essays presents the results of the project together with contributions from scholars who took part in its seminars and conferences.¹ The book comprises thirty-five essays and is structured into four parts: art as a practice of female power; women as professional artists; women and the visual construction of identity; and pioneering women as curators and members of royal academies. Although the content is not limited to early modern Spain and some essays provide examples of works of art from other European countries, most of them deal with the Hispanic world of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries; only the last section addresses the twentieth century. The essays cover a variety of subjects, from painting to architecture and music or book making, demonstrating the involvement of women in every aspect of the production and consumption of art.

Part 1 focuses on women of the court and noble women, including late seventeenth to early eighteenth-century queens and royal women living in the convent of Las Descalzas Reales, founded in 1559 by Juana of Portugal. Among the queens, Isabel of Farnesio (1692–1766), wife of Philip V and one of the greatest art collectors of her time, is discussed in three articles. The other main group examined in this part are elite women, such as María de Pisa (1495–c.1574), who commissioned such important architectural works as her family palace (Palacio de María de Pisa, facing Las Descalzas Reales) and its funerary chapel in the monastery of St Martin in sixteenth-century Madrid.

The second part presents a general survey of female artists in Spain, using as its main source Antonio Palomino's artistic treatise *El Museo Pictórico y Escala Óptica* (1715–24), and an essay by Ana Diéguez-Rodríguez entitled 'Pintoras flamencas en los siglos XVI y XVII: las sagas familiares y el talento' dealing with Flemish artists. The section also includes case studies on the Italian nun and painter Plautilla Bricci (1616–1705), the sculptor Luisa Roldán (1689–1706) and women working in Madrid's artist workshops. The last essay, by Miguel Hermoso Cuesta, proposes methodological strategies for addressing such challenges as the scarcity of information on women practitioners in archival sources. The section closes with three essays dedicated to the presence of women in the art of book printing, both in Europe and New Spain (present-day Mexico).

Three essays in part 3, dedicated to women, art and identity, deal with what

could be called urban culture and analyse domestic architecture in sixteenth-century Seville, women in Madrid's public spaces in the seventeenth century, and the *petimetras* culture of the Enlightenment. The first of these, by Elena Díez Jorge, María Núñez González and Ana Aranda Bernal, provides useful plans and sections of palaces and houses in Seville and examines the buildings in connection with the work performed in the domestic interiors by different members of the household. As many as five essays address the Portuguese and Spanish courts, analysing Sofonisba Anguissola's role at the court of Isabel de Valois (1545–68) and the strategies of representation in images of the French queen Isabel de Borbón (reg.1621–44), the first wife of Philip IV. An essay by David García López focuses on the paintings of the Duchess of Béjar (1631–after 1706) and discusses the nun and painter Sor Estefanía de la Encarnación (c.1597–1665); this discussion might have been better placed in the section dedicated to women and art production.

The subject of the fourth and final part, the presence of women as members of the Royal Academies of Fine Arts and their professional role as curators or in the management of art and cultural heritage, has not attracted much scholarly attention up to now, at least in the Spanish context. This is the only part of the book that goes beyond the chronological framework of the others and is concerned with the twentieth century. Of the six essays, two present the life and careers of women in Madrid's Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando and the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Carlos de Valencia. The rest discuss museum curators in early twentieth-century Spain, among them some almost unknown and fascinating figures, such as Ursicina Martínez Gallego (1906–2004), the director of the archaeological museum of León. Two other essays are dedicated respectively to female archaeologists in Europe and to Luisa Mortari (d.2000), the superintendent of cultural heritage in the region of Molise. Even if the connection of this part to the rest of the publication could have been better explained, the information provided here opens up new possibilities for research in museum studies.

As with most collections of articles, some essays present thorough research whereas others are more superficial. Nevertheless, the editors should be congratulated for bringing together established scholars and younger art

historians in this informative and ambitious volume, which is an important contribution to women's studies.

¹ Information on the project 'Femenino singular: Las mujeres y las artes en la corte española en la Edad Moderna (reinas, nobles, artistas y empresarias)', including a list of seminars and activities, is available at https://www.ucm.es/femenino_singular/, accessed 2nd February 2022.

Rembrandt: Studies in his Varied Approaches to Italian Art

By Amy Golahny. 258 pp. incl. 138 col. ills. (Brill, Leiden, 2020), €129. ISBN 978-90-04-38266-4.

by JEROEN GILTAIJ

Each of the seven chapters of Amy Golahny's book studies one aspect of Rembrandt's art in its relationship with that of Italy. The first chapter sets the scene with an examination of Dutch artists who travelled to Italy, including Willem van Aelst and, in particular, Jacob van Swanenburg and Pieter Lastman, who became Rembrandt's teachers; the chapter also presents a survey of Italian art in Amsterdam in the seventeenth century. Chapter 2 discusses

how Rembrandt's attitude to Italian art was judged by contemporaries who knew him personally, such as Constantijn Huygens, Joachim von Sandrart and Gerard de Lairesse. Andries Pels, Jeremias de Decker and Wybrand de Geest all criticised Rembrandt's attitude to and use of Italian art, especially his preference for the depiction of peasants rather than Classical figures. Yet, although Arnold Houbraken argued that Rembrandt should have modelled his work more closely on Italian art, the Italian artist Stefano della Bella was sufficiently impressed to copy Rembrandt in his etchings. In the final section of this chapter, ambitiously titled 'Rembrandt's goal in art', Golahny concludes that Italian art and ideas contributed to Rembrandt's inventions but did not determine his approach to his art.

Rembrandt's impressive art collection and the way he used it for his own works are the subject of the third chapter. He collected sculptures, natural curiosities, crafted luxury items and, in particular, prints and drawings, and he made copies after Italian models. Golahny argues that he borrowed

5. *The Supper at Emmaus*, by Rembrandt. c.1629. Paper on panel, 37.4 by 42.3 cm. (Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris).

